

Dear Mayor Tregle:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting held in Morgan City, Louisiana, on August 22, 2003. In your statement you discussed a number of issues of concern to your community.

In May 2002, the New Orleans District signed a Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement with the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District for a 3-year feasibility study of the deepening of the Atchafalaya River and Bayous Chene, Boeuf, and Black navigation channels. Justification for a deeper channel is a major challenge, given the high cost of maintaining the currently authorized 20-foot Atchafalaya River bar channel. We are hopeful that our ongoing efforts to reduce the maintenance requirements of the 20-foot channel will also help reduce the incremental maintenance requirements for a deeper channel. We will consider project depths up to 35 feet in the study of the feasibility of deepening the navigation channels. The study completion schedule has slipped from May 2005 to January 2006 due to a shortfall in Federal funding for Fiscal Year 2003; however, it appears that Fiscal Year 2004 funding will be adequate to continue the study without further delay.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently completed the draft report, "Mississippi River and Tributaries, Atchafalaya Basin, Louisiana, Lower Atchafalaya Basin Reevaluation Study." This report contains recommendations to modify the Mississippi River and Tributaries Flood Control project to account for any future changes in water levels in the Morgan City area and the area to the east of Morgan City, including changes as a result

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of the growth and development of the Atchafalaya Bay deltas. Sophisticated numerical models were used to predict future delta growth. These predicted growth rates were used in the flow line and the backwater protection analyses.

The American Pass Weir is part of the channel training works for the Atchafalaya River Main Channel. Channel training works were constructed to the height of the average annual high water to confine the flow. By confining the flow to the main channel, the channel works decrease the sediment deposition in the overbank area and accelerate development of the main channel. Several channels were left open or structures were

constructed at the channel entrance to provide public access and/or allow fresh water into the overbank and interior areas. The American Pass Weir was designed to return flows to the Atchafalaya Basin Main Channel and provide navigation access across the channel training works for small watercraft and barges. There was no other channel work associated with the weir. The navigation features of the weir consist of a sill at -8.5 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (approximately -7.72 foot Mean Low Gulf), a 25-foot width and a 250-foot length.

The Commission realizes that Morgan City is pursuing Congressional authorization for a Type A Regional Visitor Center at full Federal cost for construction, operation, and maintenance. We are ready to pursue work for the center, pending Congressional authorization, appropriation, and programming of funds for design and construction.

The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission